

**USACHPPM**  
**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**

24 January 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## HOT ISSUES

### Alcohol May Boost Testosterone in Brain and Blood

15 January – Reuters reported a testosterone surge in the brain could help explain the drunken behavior of some men and women, if new animal research is any indication. Researchers found that alcohol gave a quick jolt to testosterone levels in the brains and blood of some male rats. They speculate that the findings may be important for understanding the "behavioral changes" that, for some people, go hand-in-hand with drinking. "Marked increases in brain testosterone might be relevant to aggressive behavior in some individuals," Dr. Robert H. Purdy, the senior author of the new report, told Reuters Health. "You need to keep in mind the word 'some,' however." Clearly, people differ in how alcohol affects them, noted Purdy, a scientist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California. He and his colleagues report their findings in the January issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*. [View Article](#)

### Carbon Dioxide Gas May Improve Angioplasty Results

20 January – Reuters reported carbon dioxide gas holds promise as a way to keep unclogged arteries from becoming blocked again, according to a recent study. When rats were given a low dose of carbon monoxide before undergoing the artery-clearing procedure angioplasty, arteries were much less likely to re-clog afterwards. It is too soon to say whether carbon monoxide will ever be used to prepare people for angioplasty, but researchers are now studying its effects in pigs, who have more human-like vessels than rats. When rats inhaled a low dose of carbon monoxide for an hour before angioplasty, re-clogging was "significantly inhibited," Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, of the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, told Reuters Health in an interview. [View Article](#)

### Enzyme Exacerbates Heart Disease

20 January – Health Scout News reported an enzyme called ACAT2 that is found only in the intestines and liver triggers hardening of the arteries in mice, according to a study in this week's issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The finding by researchers at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center and the University of California, San Francisco, may help scientists develop new drugs to treat atherosclerosis in humans. The researchers compared mice that lacked the gene that makes ACAT2 to mice with normal ACAT2 levels.

They found that the mice without ACAT2 had almost no development of atherosclerosis and had cholesterol levels 2.5 times lower than mice with normal ACAT2 levels. [View Article](#)

## Fat Intake Not Linked to Dementia Risk: Study

20 January – Reuters reported a new study has failed to show a link between fats--both the "good" and "bad" types--and mental decline. But the Dutch study is not the final word on the subject, its authors say. It would be "premature" to conclude that cholesterol and fats that affect cholesterol are not related to the risk of dementia, according to a team led by Dr. M.M.B. Breteler at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam. Several pieces of evidence suggest that fat and cholesterol may influence the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. For example, animal studies have shown that a high-cholesterol diet increases the build-up of Alzheimer's-related brain proteins. In addition, some evidence suggests that cholesterol-lowering medications may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's. Also, a type of polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) has been shown to battle inflammation. Since inflammation may increase the risk of dementia, these fatty acids, which are found in fish and fish oils, could conceivably cut dementia risk. Despite these suggestions of a relationship, the current study of more than 5,000 people published in the journal *Neurology* did not find a link between fat intake and dementia risk. [View Article](#)

## Gene Therapy Helps Poor Circulation in Legs

21 January – Health Scout News reported gene therapy that stimulates the growth of new blood vessels may someday replace the need for amputation in people with severe circulation problems in their legs, according to researchers. Researchers from the Jobst Vascular Center in Ohio presented their findings Jan. 21 at the 15th Annual International Symposium on Endovascular Therapy in Miami Beach. They conducted a Phase I trial to assess a genetically engineered angiogenic growth factor called NV1FGF in legs with severely blocked blood vessels. The study of 51 patients found the treatment was safe and the procedure showed some evidence -- less pain, improved ulcer healing and enhanced blood pressure -- of improved circulation in the legs. The researchers are now enrolling 70 people in a Phase II trial that will compare the effectiveness of the growth factor against a placebo. [View Article](#)

## Rapid 'Dipstick' Plague Test Developed

17 January – CNN reported scientists have developed a simple and reliable test to rapidly diagnose plague, a sometimes-deadly disease that authorities fear could be used in a bioterror attack. Experts say the new test, described this week in *The Lancet* medical journal, could save lives and help control the disease in the developing world -- and fill an important need in global bioterrorism preparedness and response. Although the new test could help in more rapid diagnosis during a bioterror crisis, those who most need it are doctors in rural parts of the developing world, where most natural plague cases occur and labs are far from many communities. Late diagnosis is the major cause of death and spread of the disease. In the study, scientists from the Pasteur Institute in France and from the Ministry of Health in Madagascar developed a simple dipstick test that recognizes a substance given off uniquely by the plague bacteria. The researchers found the tests were as good as lab tests. [View Article](#)

## Scientists ID Key Gene for Long-Term Immunity

15 January – Reuters reported scientists in the United States have identified a key gene involved in long-term immunity against infections in a finding that could play an important role in vaccine research. Without the gene, called SAP, the immune system cannot recognize and react to pathogens, making people more vulnerable to diseases. "So this gene is clearly important for immune responses. Our work shows that the SAP gene is a central player in long-term antibody responses, and indicates that manipulation of SAP may have therapeutic benefits in generating better antibody responses," said Shane Crotty of the Emory Vaccine Research Center in Georgia. If the germ invades the body again the immune system should be able to remember it and fight it without the person getting ill. Crotty and his colleagues discovered the gene by measuring the immune response of genetically engineered, or knockout, mice that lacked SAP and normal mice. Their research is reported in the science journal Nature. [View Article](#)

## Vitamin A raises Risk of Bone Injuries

22 January — MSNBC News reported taking vitamin A supplements can weaken bones and increase the risk of fractures up to seven times, according to a large Swedish study. The research, conducted on men, confirms three earlier studies in women showing that high intake of vitamin A raises the risk of broken hips and weak bones. The latest study is the first to measure levels of the vitamin in blood, rather than just asking about diet and supplement use. The three-decade study and other evidence suggest that daily vitamin A consumption of more than 1.5 milligrams can be dangerous, and that people should not take vitamin A supplements. Current dietary recommendations call for only 0.7 mg of vitamin A for women and 0.9 mg for men a day, which is easily supplied by a healthy diet. But many popular multivitamins contain 0.75 mg to 1.5 mg of vitamin A, generally listed on labels as 2,500 international units and 5,000 IUs, respectively. "Vitamin A is potentially harmful," said Dr. Donald Louria, at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. "Unless there is a known medical reason like certain diseases of the eye, ... people should not be taking vitamin A supplements." The study by doctors at University Hospital in Uppsala is reported in the current issue of the New England Journal of Medicine. [View Article](#)

## Water-Filtered Infrared Light Fights Warts: Study

20 January – Reuters reported water filtered infrared light is an effective and painless means of removing warts, according to German dermatologists who report positive results from a small clinical trial. Dr. Silke Fuchs from the Jena University dermatology clinic said that when infrared radiation is conducted through water, its long-wave parts are filtered out in favor of the short-wave IR-A band. This is said to result in a reduced risk of superficial burns and a better penetration into tissues. "This special infrared light penetrates particularly deep into the skin," she said in a statement. Heating the wart increases blood flow and stimulates an immune response to the human papilloma virus. Fuchs and her team, led by dermatology Professor Peter Elsner, conducted a clinical study on 80 patients with warts that had resisted other treatments. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## Botswana: Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak

17 January – IRIN News reported the European Union (EU) followed South Africa's lead on Thursday and banned imports of deboned meat from Botswana following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the country. The EU will reevaluate its position within 3 months while neighboring South Africa, which has just recovered from a similar outbreak and EU ban, has extended its ban to include live cloven-hoofed animals, dairy products, meat products, hides and skins and other products, and posted special patrols at its border with Botswana. The outbreak was first reported on a communal farm in the Matsiloje extension area in the Francistown district to the north east of the country on Sat 11 Jan 2003. It is the second outbreak in 2 years. [View Article](#)

## DRC: Influenza Kills 2,000

22 January – World News reported Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Health Minister Mashako Mamba told IRIN on Tuesday that "more than" 2,000 people had died as the result of an influenza epidemic that had been sweeping across parts of the country for one-and-a-half months. He said officials had also registered another 500,000 cases of people infected by the virus, which had spread from the Central African Republic, along the Ubangi and Congo rivers before reaching the DRC capital, Kinshasa, in December 2002. "There are many more people infected by this virulent form of influenza in Kinshasa, but more deaths have been registered in the provinces because of the collapse of the health services due to the war," he said. Affected areas are Thuapa, in the south of Equateur Province, and Inongo, near Lake Mai-Ndombe, in the north of Bandundu Province. He said malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency were also factors accounting for the high mortality rate in the provinces, where 60 percent to 80 percent of children and adults were malnourished in the districts of Nord Ubangi and Bosobolo, the two zones where the first cases of influenza were recorded. [View Article](#)

## Nordic Nations Team Up for Possible Smallpox Attack

17 January – Reuters reported Nordic countries are creating a common strategy to defend their 24 million people against a possible biological warfare attack, a leading Finnish scientist said. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden intend to store millions of doses of smallpox vaccinations in case authorities need to inoculate their populations, said Finnish research professor Pauli Leinikki. "This is about agreeing on guidelines we should follow in case the situation changes and we need smallpox vaccinations," said Leinikki, who works at Finland's National Public Health Institute in charge of surveillance and control of communicable diseases. "These plans concern the storage of vaccines. This is a plan for the future in case of biological warfare," he told Reuters. He said Nordic countries were forging their strategy in the aftermath of the anthrax attacks in the United States in 2001 and the smallpox initiative did not mean the region had received any threats. Fears of a biological attack in the aftermath of terror attacks against Western targets over the past two years were highlighted this month with the discovery of small amounts of ricin, considered a moderate threat, in a London apartment. [View Article](#)

## Yellow fever Confirmed in Guinea

20 January – ProMed reported that the World Health Organization has confirmed 11 cases of yellow fever in Macenta, Guinea occurring in the period ending 31 Dec 2002. There have been with 6 deaths. [View Report](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Malaria Alert Sounded in Rift Valley

20 January – AllAfrica.com reported the government yesterday sounded a malaria alert in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya and urged residents to take precautionary measures. The provincial medical boss, Dr Kipruto Chesang', said Kericho, Nandi South, Nandi North, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia districts were affected. He said there was a rapid rise in the number of cases in those areas in the past two weeks, which could lead to an epidemic. Dr Chesang' said in the first week of January, 167 cases were reported which went up to 268 cases in the second week. Dr Chesang' said residents should use insecticide treated nets and appropriate insecticide sprays as advised by health personnel. The medical officer advised sick people to seek treatment for any malaria symptoms such as sudden headache and weakness of body and joint pains. Special attention should be given to children under the age of five years, he said. [View Article](#)

### Tajikistan: Measles Outbreak Contained by Mass Vaccination

21 January – Relief Web reported government health workers along with international aid agencies and the United Nations have managed to contain a measles outbreak in eastern Tajikistan, following one of the biggest vaccination campaigns in the country. The mass-immunization reached more than 65,000 children in the region. "We have managed to control the outbreak and this is a real achievement for all those involved including the government in one of the biggest efforts ever seen," country manager for Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Tajikistan, Paul McPhun told IRIN from the capital, Dushanbe. In total, six districts in the Rasht valley were affected in December 2002. The French NGO, MSF, the British NGO, Merlin, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in conjunction with the Tajik Ministry of Health carried out the vaccination of children aged between one and 15. The worst affected districts in the valley were Tajikabad and Jirgital. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### ASTHO Urges States to Prepare for Influenza Pandemic

14 January - CIDRAP News reported the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) says the present is an excellent time for states to prepare for the next influenza pandemic and has issued a report to help show the way. Although 47 states are working on or

have completed draft plans for coping with a "flu" pandemic, the United States is not prepared for a event like the 1918 Spanish flu, which killed at least 550,000 Americans, according to the ASTHO document. Now is the right time to prepare, because a pandemic is inevitable and because federal grants for public health infrastructure and planning have greatly increased in response to terrorism worries, according to ASTHO. The group's recently published report is titled "Preparedness Planning for State Health Officials: Nature's Terrorist Attack: Pandemic Influenza." The report says an influenza pandemic may cause far more harm than a bioterrorist attack: an estimated 89,000 to 207,000 deaths, 314,000 to 734,000 hospitalizations, 18 million to 42 million medical visits, and 20 million to 47 million additional illness cases. [View Article](#)

## Avant Works on Oral Vaccine for Plague, Anthrax

22 January – ABC News reported vaccine maker Avant Immunotherapeutics, Inc. said it won a U.S. government contract to work on an oral vaccine to protect troops against both anthrax and plague infections. The vaccine will use the cholera bacterium as a "bus" to carry in the proteins to protect against plague and anthrax, the company said. It will also protect against cholera. The vaccine, if it works, will be years in the making. The U.S. Department of Defense contracted the work to DynPort Vaccine Company LLC, a joint venture between DynCorp of Reston, Virginia and Porton International, Inc. DVC in turn subcontracted to Avant, a Needham, Massachusetts-based biotechnology company specializing in vaccines.

## Highway Deaths Spike After Super Bowl - Study

23 January – Reuters reported a study of the last 27 Super Bowl Sundays concluded the highway death rate jumped 70% in the first hour after the big game and remained high over the next few hours. The increase was particularly dramatic in states with the losing team, where the death rate was 147% higher than on the Sundays before and after the championship. If the trend holds this Sunday--when the Oakland Raiders square off against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFL championship match--seven extra people will die on US highways and 600 more will be injured in traffic accidents just because it is Super Bowl Sunday. The researchers, in a letter published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine, said they found a 10% drop in the accident rate during the game itself--presumably because fewer people are on the road--but the post-game accidents more than made up for the reduction. [View Article](#)

## Nutrition: Americans Super-sizing at Home Also

21 January – CNN News reported Americans are not only super-sizing their meals at the drive-thru but eating bigger portions at home, too. Researchers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill analyzed three government surveys taken over two decades and reviewed answers to the average portion size consumed for specific foods, such as snacks, desserts and soft drinks. They also looked at whether the eating was done at home or out. "Between 1977 and 1996, food portion sizes increased both inside and outside the home for all categories except pizza," Samara Joy Nielsen and Barry M. Popkin write in the Journal of the American Medical Association. "The most surprising result is the large portion-size increases for food consumed at home -- a shift that indicates marked changes in eating behavior in general," the researchers reported. Americans' waistlines are keeping up with the portion increase trend. Nearly 60 percent of the country is overweight, with the numbers growing, said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [View Article](#)

## Powerful Earthquake Rocks Mexico

22 January – ABC News reported a powerful earthquake ripped through western and central Mexico, killing at least 21 people, collapsing dozens of houses and leaving the worst-hit state shrouded in darkness with power outages. The death toll continued to rise Wednesday as emergency crews surveyed the full extent of the damage hours after the ground had stopped shaking. The quake struck at 8:07 p.m. Tuesday in Colima, a small state that includes the port city of Manzanillo, about 300 miles west of Mexico City. Mexico's national seismological service put the quake's magnitude at 7.6, but the U.S. Geological Survey calculated it at 7.8. "Because of the size of the earthquake and its shallow depth, USGS is expecting substantial damage," said a U.S. Geological Survey spokesman. Nearly all of the state remained without electricity and phone service early Wednesday, Moreno Pena said. President Vicente Fox ordered the military to search for damage near the quake's epicenter, a region that included remote villages in coastal areas of Jalisco and Colima. The quake swayed buildings, briefly knocked out power and telephone service and sent panicked residents running into the streets in Mexico City, but officials said there were no reports of deaths or serious damage there. [View Article](#)

## Prescription Drug Abuse Rising Rapidly

16 January - The FDA reported abuse of prescription drugs is rising rapidly in the United States, according to recent data released. In 2001 almost three million youth aged 12 to 17 had used prescription medications non-medically in their lifetimes. The data were released to focus public attention on the dangers of abusing prescription medications. "The public needs to know that just because a medication is safe and even life-saving when used appropriately, it is not harmless if used inappropriately," said SAMHSA Administrator Charles Curie. "Abuse of prescription drugs can lead to addiction, misdiagnosis of serious illness, life threatening circumstances and even death." Data released by SAMHSA from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse showed about 15 percent of 18 and 19 year olds used prescription medications non-medically in the past year. "Young adults, even teens, are taking opioids, anti-depressants and stimulants for recreation," said H. Westley Clark, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). "They do not seem to realize that this misuse can lead to serious problems with addiction." [View Article](#)

## Uninsured Skip Care Due to Medical Debt: Report

15 January - Reuters reported nearly half of people without health insurance report being in debt because of unpaid medical bills, according to a national survey. Nearly one quarter of people carrying medical debt in the survey said that their bills would prevent them from seeking medical care in the future for fear of being forced to pay. One in seven reported forgoing prescribed medications because of the cost of the drugs. The problem is worse in rural areas, where up to 75% of uninsured patients visiting outpatient clinics said they could not afford to pay for their required prescriptions. Experts said that the results, obtained in a 2000 survey of 6,884 uninsured persons in 18 states, underscores the urgency of providing health coverage to the growing number of uninsured persons in the US. [View Report](#)

## U.S. Activates Bioweapon Monitors

22 January – CBS News reported the government is adapting environmental monitors scattered across the United States to detect bioterrorism, hoping they will provide early warning if smallpox, anthrax or other deadly germs are released into the air. The system would retrofit many of the 3,000 existing environmental monitoring stations with new filters to detect biological agents, an administration official said Tuesday. It was unclear if or when the administration planned to announce the project, but the system was to begin operating on Wednesday in New York City, the newspaper reports. Results of the early warnings could be confirmed at a network of laboratories within 24 hours using DNA analysis, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The system was tested throughout 2002, including at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the official said. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### Distrust Reopens the Door for Polio in India

19 January – The Global Health Council reported the polio has made a defiant comeback in India. In 2001, after years of aggressive mass immunizations, there were 239 new cases in the country -- down from about 200,000 in the early 1980's. Officials were confident that India could eliminate the disease, as so many countries have, by the end of 2002. Instead, India had 1,509 newly diagnosed cases last year -- a vast majority, 1,197, in Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state, and one of its poorest. Uttar Pradesh accounted for 68 percent of the polio cases worldwide. The reason, according to government officials and community leaders, seems to be largely a rumor that the oral vaccine, given as drops, was part of a government population control scheme. No one knows how it started, but its effects are now clear. [View Article](#)

### Fiji: Dengue Fever Warning for Suva and Western Islands

20 January - Dengue fever has broken out in the South Pacific nation of Fiji. Radio Australia reports that a dengue fever warning has been issued for the Fijian capital of Suva and for Fiji's western islands. As of Fri 9 Jan 2003, 16 cases have been confirmed at 2 hospitals. [View Report](#)

### India (Kerala): Dengue-related Deaths in City of Thiruvananthapuram

20 January – ProMed reported there have been 18 confirmed cases of dengue fever so far this year in the district. The District Medical Officer sought community participation in vector control measures targeted at reducing the density of the mosquito species that transmit dengue virus to humans. Dr. Shailaja underlined the importance of coordinated efforts among various departments and the public for achieving effective vector control. [View Report](#)

### Japan Confirms 6th Case of Mad Cow Disease

19 January – ProMed reported on Japan's sixth case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease after it confirmed the brain-wasting illness in a cow in Wakayama Prefecture. It was found that a Holstein cow from the town of Shibechea in Hokkaido was infected with the disease. Five cows had been confirmed infected with BSE in Japan since the first case of the disease was discovered in Chiba Prefecture in September 2001. Of the 6 BSE-infected cows, 4 were born in Hokkaido, and one each was born in Gunma and Kanagawa prefectures, ministry officials said. The ministry has carried out BSE tests on all cattle for human consumption since October 2001. The latest case emerged after beef consumption began to pick up after a sharp drop in beef sales due to shaken public confidence in the meat industry. [View Report](#)

## Malaysia: Dengue Outbreaks

20 January – ProMed reported Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) has issued a dengue alert to students staying off-campus, especially those living in the vicinity of Serdang and Balakong, following an 80 percent surge in dengue cases reportedly contracted outside the campus. UPM Health Centre director Dr Yahaya Abu Ahmad said that in December 2002 alone, 15 students came down with dengue fever, adding that only 2 of the students who fell sick lived on campus. He said most of the students infected by dengue were living in Sri Serdang, Sri Kembangan, Taman Universiti, and Balakong, adding that the university had informed the local authority -- Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) -- on the risk areas identified. Dr Yahaya said the University had screened all students who were down with fever apart from implementing joint "search and destroy" operations with MPSJ. In addition, The Ipoh City Council and the Kinta Health Department will join forces "to clean up" the cluster of villages in the Manjoi area to rid it of *Aedes* mosquitoes and allay the fear of some 24,400 residents in the locality. This is in view of the death of 3 children in Manjoi over the last 2 weeks after they were believed to have contracted dengue fever. [View Report](#)

## Outbreak of Undiagnosed Febrile Illness in Jaffna, Sri Lanka

19 January – ProMed reported a "mystery illness" has claimed over 30 lives in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Officials are certain it is a viral fever, but they haven't been able to identify the virus yet. It was added that although the Health Department has sent out several teams of top-level officials following the outbreak of the disease, all the samples they had brought with them to Colombo had so far tested negative. The Health Department spokesman said that the reason why the tests so far had been negative and they had not yet been able to isolate the virus was probably because of the delay in bringing down the samples from Jaffna to Colombo. They are now making arrangements to try and bring down the samples on the same day they were taken. While officials have not yet been able to diagnose the illness, they are keeping the disease from spreading by treating the symptoms. Latest reports received from the Jaffna hospital have shown that the number of new patients being admitted to the Teaching Hospital is on the decline. There was a concern that the disease could spread to neighboring districts but that fear is lessened now that the disease seems to be under control. Typical symptoms of the yet-to-be identified viral illness are high fever for several days, a confused state of mind, pneumonia, and respiratory and renal failure. [View Report](#)

## Shallow Wells Pose Health Hazard

21 January – The Times of India reported residents of Amritsar, India are reportedly drinking contaminated water and are at high risk of acquiring various water borne diseases. Realizing this, Amritsar Municipal Corporation (AMC) has sounded an alarm against drinking water drawn through hand pumps and submersible pumps, having bores less than 250 to 300 feet. Kartar Singh, superintending engineer in the water supply wing of AMC, says thousands of bores in the city were dug to not more than 80 to 100 feet as against AMC's recommendation of 250 to 300 feet. In most cases, soak pits were also constructed close to these bores, thus increasing chances of contamination of drinking water with human waste, industrial toxins. [View Report](#)

## Sri Lanka: Dengue Fever Outbreak in the Puttalam and Colombo Districts

20 January – ProMed reported Dengue fever is raising its head again in the Puttalam district causing panic among residents. Parliamentary Affairs Minister A.H.M Azwer said that around 80 dengue fever cases have been reported from the Puttalam district this year. Azwer said there was a shortage of beds and other medical equipment in the hospitals owing to the sudden rush of dengue patients. The Prime Minister has directed medical officers to take immediate steps to combat the fever. Meanwhile, the people in Puttalam have launched a one-week anti-dengue campaign in collaboration with the Puttalam Urban Council. In addition, Colombo Municipal Council's Health Department warned the public to be on the alert after 15 dengue patients were found in the Municipality area during the last 2 weeks. The chief medical official, Dr. Kariyawasam said out of the total cases, one had arrived from abroad while another had come from Jaffna. "We suspect both had got dengue before arriving in Colombo," he said. Dr. Kariyawasam urged the public to keep their environment and work places clean and destroy mosquito-breeding places to prevent a possible outbreak. [View Report](#)

## Taiwan: Imported Dengue Fever Case Confirmed in Taichung

20 January – ProMed reported health officials in Taichung County are warning anyone with symptoms of dengue fever to seek medical attention, after a man in the area was found to have brought the disease back with him from Thailand. The man was reported as living in Taichung County's Shengkang Township and working in the nearby Waipu Township. An inspection team was sent to the man's house and place of work the next day to spray for mosquitoes and check up on the man's family. Environmental officials were asked to clean up the area around where the man lived and worked to make sure that mosquitoes carrying the disease would not be able to reproduce. An outbreak of endemic dengue fever has been ravaging southern Taiwan since summer 2002 and could continue into next summer. [View Report](#)

# USSOUTHCOM

## Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome Case Confirmed in Argentina

17 January – ProMed reported a Buenos Aires policeman has been admitted to hospital in serious condition after having contracted a hantavirus infection. The sanitary authorities of the province are investigating if the infection was acquired in Buenos Aires or in Pinamar, where the

patient was working temporarily. According to the specialists, the patient may have contracted the infection from long-tailed pygmy rice rats *Oligoryzomys longicaudatus* present in Pinamar's police stables. The long-tailed pygmy rice rat is a reservoir host for Andes virus, a Hantavirus present in Chile and southwestern Argentina to about 50 degrees south latitude. This virus has been associated previously with cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in this region. The Health Department of Buenos Aires stated that specialists were already at the site. The aim is to corroborate the presence of long-tailed pygmy rice rats in the area, and if found to take action to eliminate them. [View Report](#)

## Yellow Fever Alert: Monkey Deaths Along Colombia-Venezuela Border

18 January – ProMed reported the strange death of 22 monkeys of a species that lives along the border between Colombia and Venezuela raised alert among the health authorities of the region that yellow fever may have reached the area. These were the declarations of Tahiz Ortega, mayor of Tibu, as she explained that the animals were found in an area close to her town and the Venezuelan town of Casigua. The dead animals were sent to Cucuta [Colombia] for the required laboratory tests. [View Report](#)

## Yellow Fever in Brazil

17 January – ProMED reported the Brazilian Ministry of Health has reported 24 cases and 5 deaths from sylvatic yellow fever in Minas Gerais State. All cases, of which 4 have been laboratory confirmed, have occurred in a localized rural area. Teams from the Ministry of Health and the Minas Gerais State health department are investigating. A vaccination campaign has already started. The WHO Regional Office for the Americas (PAHO) is following the outbreak closely and is in regular communication with the Ministry of Health. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

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